

November 3, 2006

RE: Julie Pedersen v. Department of Social and Health Services  
Allocation Review Request 06AL0068

Dear Ms. Pedersen,

On September 13, 2006, I conducted a Director's review meeting at the Department of Personnel, 2828 Capitol Boulevard, Olympia, Washington, concerning the allocation of your position. Present at the Director's review meeting were you, Sharon Buss, Human Resources Manager at Rainier School, and Pam Pelton, Classification and Recruitment Manager, representing the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

**Background**

On August 23, 2005, you submitted a Position Review Request (PRR) to the Rainier School Human Resource Office, requesting that your Human Resource Consultant 1 position, #B165, be reallocated to a Human Resource Consultant 2. The PRR was signed by Ms. Buss and Dave Fiorini, Human Resource Administrator, on September 22, 2005. On December 13, 2005, Human Resource Consultant Lloyd Hoage conducted a desk audit as part of an office review of several positions performing human resource related activities. During his desk audit, Mr. Hoage also relied on a Position Description Form (PDF) completed by management but unsigned. Mr. Hoage subsequently provided a recommendation to Classification and Recruitment Manager Dave Cahill.

By letter dated February 27, 2006, Mr. Cahill notified you that your position #B165 was properly allocated to the Human Resource Consultant 1 (HRC 1) classification. Mr. Cahill concluded that the duties you performed were professional but also routine in nature. Mr. Cahill also noted that he did not question your assertion that you performed some higher level duties when the HRC 3 position was vacant, but he concluded the duties were not assigned to your position during the timeframe relevant to this position review request.

The following summarizes your perspective as well as your employer's:

### **Summary of Ms. Pedersen's Perspective**

Ms. Pedersen asserts there have been staffing issues in her HR office, and as a result, she contends she assumed duties previously assigned to an HRC 3. As an example, Ms. Pedersen states she consults with managers on a daily basis about recruitment, affirmative action, selection, leave, and other HR issues. She also asserts she has the responsibility of handling all shared leave, which includes determining eligibility, making recommendations to the appointing authority, tracking approval or disapproval, notifying employees and the Payroll Department of the results, and composing shared leave determinations. Ms. Pedersen states she compiles complex reports for administrative staff and prepares job announcements for recruitment.

Ms. Pedersen further states she serves as the lead worker for a Human Resource Consultant Assistant (HRCA) in training for an HRC 1 position, and she describes her lead work as assigning, training, and checking the HRCA's work for accuracy. Ms. Pedersen contends she provides training for new HRC 3s and trains additional staff on New Employee Orientations, creating a training list for others to follow. In addition, Ms. Pedersen asserts she conducts one-on-one training with managers on various HR processes at least weekly. Ms. Pedersen disagrees with the Position Description Form (PDF) for her position and asserts she did not have an opportunity to review or sign the PDF. Consequently, Ms. Pedersen believes the PDF does not accurately portray her duties and responsibilities, and she disagrees with Mr. Cahill's determination that her position should be allocated to the HRC 1 classification.

### **Summary of the Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS's) Reasoning**

DSHS asserts the duties performed by Ms. Pedersen are mostly routine in nature and technical rather than complex. DSHS notes, for example, that many of Ms. Pedersen's assigned functions relate to processing forms (P-4s and P-2s) for payroll purposes. DSHS further contends that appointment letters are in template form, which requires a technical ability to generate. DSHS also notes that records are compiled from pre-established reports obtained from the computer system. Further, DSHS asserts that Ms. Pedersen performs technical duties when she enters transactions for payroll, reviews non-permanent appointment timeframes, processes certifications in the computer system, and compiles new employee orientation lists.

DSHS disagrees that Ms. Pedersen's position rises beyond a professional technical level because her duties do not include more complex functions such as corrective actions, layoff coordination, and advanced recruitment skills. DSHS acknowledges that some duties and responsibilities overlap within the HR class series but contends the higher level duties performed by Ms. Pedersen are sporadic and not considered a permanent responsibility. In addition, DSHS asserts the HR manager, Ms. Pedersen's supervisor, is responsible for providing consultation to the Superintendent and Rainier School's management, not Ms. Pedersen. DSHS contends that the duties described on Ms. Pedersen's position request form, as well as the descriptions she provided to Mr. Hoage during the desk audit, support her position's allocation to the HRC 1 classification.

### **Director's Determination**

This position review was based on the work performed for at least the six-month period prior to August 23, 2005, the date you filed your Position Review Request with your HR Department.

As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits presented during the Director's review meeting, and the verbal comments provided by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of your assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude your position is properly allocated to the Human Resource Consultant 1 classification.

### **Rationale for Determination**

The class series concept identifies both the HRC 1 and HRC 2 classifications as human resource professionals. The class series concept further notes that assignments frequently crossover or merge traditional functions with specialty areas. Many of the professional HRC positions lead, facilitate, or coach others regarding a wide variety of human resource issues. Some examples of the professional responsibilities include assignments in recruitment, selection, affirmative action, diversity, and development and training, as well as interpretation and application of laws, rules, policies, and procedures.

The definitions, distinguishing characteristics, and examples of core competencies illustrate the differences between class levels. For example, the HRC 1 definition describes the professional human resource duties as "routine," and the distinguishing characteristics identify the HRC 1 class as being the first professional level in the series. The distinguishing characteristics also affirm that positions in this class have specific assignments that are "mostly routine and of limited scope" and may include work in a "developmental or training capacity in preparation for a higher level." HRC 1 positions may also lead or supervise support staff.

The core competencies at the HRC 1 level include consulting by providing advice on specific courses of action and using decision making skills. Further, HRC 1 positions analyze and problem solve by identifying issues, assessing problems, developing strategies to resolve issues, and compiling and reviewing data.

In reviewing the Position Review Request (PRR) you submitted on August 23, 2005, the duties most in line with the HRC 1 classification relate to providing professional level human resource services, including consultation and advice; processing personnel/payroll actions; ensuring non-permanent appointments meet specific criteria; explaining knowledge of rules, laws, policies, and procedures relating to HR functions; and compiling data for technical reports.

You identified 15% of your assigned work as providing professional level human resource functions, including consulting and advising managers regarding the hiring

process, appropriate rules, laws, policies, and procedures. Those functions can overlap between the HRC 1 and 2 levels. For instance, the core competencies listed for each reference consulting and advising on specific courses of action.

When examining the totality of your duties, however, the majority falls within the routine scope of human resources. This is further supported by the duties described in your Performance Development Plan (PDP) for the period of 12/01/2004 through 12/01/2005 (Exhibit 10). In the PDP, which reflects a portion of the time period relevant to your request, your supervisor wrote, "Julie provided technical human resource consulting services to the Attendant Counselors of Rainier School."

The following duties relating to payroll processing, appointment letters, reviews of appointment status, and data compilation also fit within the HRC 1 level because they are more technical and routine in nature.

- 15% Process all personnel/payroll actions, including actions such as new hires, promotions, demotions, transfers, reallocations, non-permanent appointments. While performing these tasks you enter the payroll information on-line and determine items like salary range and dates concerning appointment, seniority, unbroken service, anniversary, and you compute prior service credit and salary changes. You also write appointment letters for the appointing authority's signature and respond to staff's questions regarding salaries and leave.
- 15% Review and approve all non-permanent appointment requests, determining whether the requests meet the criteria and ensuring the requests are appropriate in accordance with the rules. Ensure all the required information is included in the request and advise managers of the correct type of appointment to use.
- 5% Provide technical assistance and support to the HRM/HRC 3. Compile complex, technical reports, such as staffing and vacancy.
- 5% Compile list of new hires for New Employee Orientation on a monthly basis and provide lists to departments at Rainier School, facilitating the HR portion of the orientation and checking paperwork for completion.
- 5% Compiling, running, and distributing database reports on a monthly basis for various departments at Rainier School.
- 5% Provide consistent interpretation of personnel-related WACs and policies, affirmative action plan and activities, performance evaluation requirements, payroll information, salary compilation, period increment dates, and other appointment procedures.

Respond to and process requests in collaboration with DOP, provide training and guidance to managers on referral/register and other processes as assigned by the HR manager and HRC 3.

Each of the above sections primarily involves processing information or preparing standard documents such as appointment letters. The duties also include compilation and review of data used to generate monthly reports, which are technical and routine in nature and are characterized by the HRC 1 core competency that includes collection and review of data used to present recommendations. Although the reports are identified as "complex," the function performed relates to the compilation of data.

Since you provide technical assistance and support to your HR manager and an HRC 3, the data you compile may then be used as part of a more complex report, as you indicate in question number two of the PRR when you note that your duties include "providing information to the HRC 3 he needed to complete complex projects." Similarly, the information you provided to Mr. Hoage during the desk audit, as indicated in his notes, shows your role in many of these functions relates to processing and providing information rather than creating complex documents or making higher-level decisions (Exhibit 4).

The lead duties you perform, including training, assigning, and reviewing the work of an HRCA employee in training to become an HRC 1 and identified as 15% of your duties, are also consistent with the HRC 1 class, which does lead and supervise. Additionally, the PDP supports your role as an HRC 1 lead worker because of the types of functions you lead. For example, your supervisor noted on the PDP her appreciation for your help and expertise in training a new HRC 1 to learn the Pay 1 system, the Rainier School data base system, and the local list system for working referrals.

While you undoubtedly identify issues that arise in performing your duties, problem solve, and make recommendations, those functions are consistent with the core competencies of analysis and problem solving identified at the HRC 1 level. In order to meet the distinguishing characteristics of the HRC 2 class, the work assigned to the position must be experienced professional level work that is complex rather than routine. In addition, the assignments involve making decisions and judgments within established precedents, and the analysis and problem solving competencies involve more advanced analysis and interpretation of data to specific issues and include taking calculated risks.

The duties you performed in the absence of the HR Manager or HRC 3, as listed on the PRR (15%) meet the definition of the HRC 2 classification, which reads, "[c]onsults with and provides assistance to managers . . ." because the duties performed in their absences are more complex. Further, you assumed the duties of handling all shared leave requests made by employees, which included advising management on issues related to FMLA eligibility and reasonable accommodation in addition to shared leave. As a result you review the shared leave requests to determine whether they met the proper criteria and forward them to the Superintendent.

The remaining 5% of your duties include providing individual counseling to applicants and employees, as well as reviewing and evaluating the education and experience of applicants. Those duties may overlap with the HRC 2 level when complex issues arise, particularly in the absence of the HR Manager. However, even when considering a portion of the other professional consulting and advising duties listed as 15%, the higher-level tasks total approximately 20 – 25% of your overall assigned duties and responsibilities.

It is clear by your supervisor's comments on your PDP, as well as the appreciation she expressed about your willingness to assume shared leave responsibilities, train others, and assist her with handling staff reassignments during a house closure at Rainier School, that your contributions to the program are highly valued. An allocation, however, is based on a comparison of the majority of assigned duties and responsibilities to the available job classifications. Therefore, the Human Resource Consultant 1 classification best describes your position #B165.

### **Appeal Rights**

WAC 357-49-018 provides that either party may appeal the results of the Director's review to the Personnel Resources Board (board) by filing written exceptions to the Director's determination in accordance with Chapter 357-52 WAC.

WAC 357-52-015 states that an appeal must be received in writing at the office of the board within thirty (30) calendar days after service of the Director's determination. The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

Sincerely,

Teresa Parsons  
Director's Review Supervisor

c: Pam Pelton, DSHS  
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits